

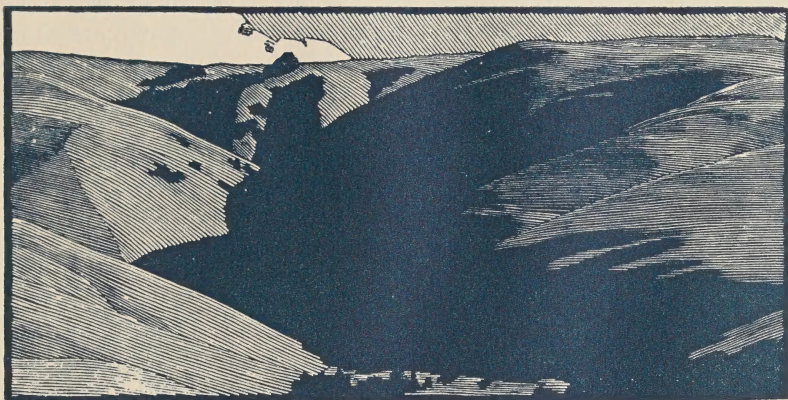
THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

Quarterly News-Letter

LXX

NUMBER 3

SUMMER 2005



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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA, founded in 1912, is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to 1,000 members, excluding Student members with proof of student status. When vacancies exist, membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Regular membership is \$55; Sustaining \$75; Patron \$150; and Student \$25.

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The *Quarterly News-Letter* is designed and composed in Rialto and printed letterpress by Peter Rutledge Koch with the assistance of Jonathan Gerken.

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ISSN I 083-7345

A TIME FOR REMEMBERING: THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS, DANCING DIVAS & DANSEURS NOBLES

by Adela Roatcap



It used to be said, during my grandparents' time, that "if one did not live before the Great War, one had not lived at all." A child might ask—why? The answer was always the same: "Glamour, my dear. You wouldn't understand." I knew my grandparents had lost everything they couldn't carry. A few beautiful books had survived the long voyage to America, and, of course, no one had been able to rob them of the dear old waltzes and the sweet arias which they played and sang by heart. In this new land my grandparents cared desperately about music, opera, and the ballet. When they spoke of having seen *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, Serge Diaghilev's *Petroushka*, *Firebird* and the sensational *Scheherazade*, they made it clear where glamour resided. Today Stravinsky's music and Rimsky Korsakoff's operas are being issued in glorious DVD. I've just seen a stunning performance of *Le Coq d'Or* filmed at the Palace Garnier, the Paris Opera; it does not get any better than that. I'm curious. What's the relationship between *Le Coq d'Or* and the Golden Cockerel Press? John Dreyfus answers that question on the very first page

of *A Typographical Masterpiece: An account by John Dreyfus of Eric Gill's collaboration with Robert Gibbings in producing the Golden Cockerel Press edition of 'The Four Gospels' in 1931*. Dreyfus says:

The Press took its name from Diaghilev's widely admired ballet *Le Coq d'Or*. The founder of an earlier English private press, Charles Ricketts, called the ballet's first London production in 1914 delightful 'beyond all reason.' Ten years later the name still had glamour.

Charles Ricketts and Diaghilev were great friends in the glamorous days when Oscar Wilde was still around and Aubrey Beardsley was illustrating *Salome*. Then Ricketts brought out *The Dial* and Diaghilev published *Mir Iskustvo - the World of Art*. Ricketts illustrated *Daphnis and Chloe* and established his Vale Press. Count Harry Kessler, another of Diaghilev's close friends, had his own Cranach Press. Diaghilev, writer and ardent bibliophile, was in enough trouble already. He could not have set up a private press in Imperial Russia, so in 1906 Diaghilev began taking Russian art, music, and opera to Paris. The Ballets Russes were a happy accident which took off, as they say, "like Gangbusters." He commissioned a musical score for *Daphnis and Chloe* from Maurice Ravel. His opinion mattered to artists and publishers. In 1924 he approved the publication of two artist's books based on his ballets, *Les Biches*, with décor by Marie Laurencin, and *Les Facheux*, illustrated by Georges Braque. In 1924, Ricketts published George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan, With Sketches & Stage Settings by Charles Ricketts*. Count Harry Kessler would outdo them all. With Gordon Craig, he was preparing the Cranach Press's amazing *Hamlet*.

Why are books about theatre, ballet, and performers so important? Because when the lights go down and the sets are taken away, when the performers get back to daily life and the fickle audience forgets all about it, whatever happened in the theatre fades away from memory. Would Oscar Wilde's *Salome* have remained popular without Beardsley's illustrations?

Autobiographical memoirs give us a sense of what happened. On June 14, 1914, Charles Ricketts attended the London premiere of *Le Coq d'Or*. In his *Self Portrait*, Ricketts reminisces about the London premiere:

...the music is exquisite, enchanting and original, the idea of the singers ranged on either side of the stage in oratorio fashion while the action is danced and mimed in the centre is admirable. Karsavina looked like a bewitching Hindu idol, her dancing and miming were incomparable.

The intelligence of the management and the choreographic inventions delighted beyond all reason.

There was another reason why Diaghilev's *Le Coq d'Or* delighted the audience. Rimsky Korsakoff's opera is really a political satire dressed up as a fairy tale. Silly old King Dodon, confused by the hopeless advice of his boyars, receives from his Astrologer a magic Golden Cockerel to warn him of impending danger. In return, Dodon promises to grant the Astrologer any wish. The Golden Cockerel sings, Dodon sends his two sons to war, and they are killed. Dodon goes to the battlefield and keeps on fighting—though he has no idea who the enemy is. Then, as if by magic, the Queen of Shemakhan appears with her tent. She tells Dodon that it was she who killed his two sons. No matter; Dodon, completely seduced by her beauty, marries the Queen of Shemakhan. As his impoverished subjects look on, Dodon kills his Astrologer, the Golden Cockerel kills Dodon, and the Queen of Shemakhan takes all and vanishes. Happily, in an epilogue, the Astrologer returns to life and informs the audience that such foolish Kings exist only in fairy tales. Tsar Nicholas II's censors must not have heard the epilogue. In 1906 they didn't allow Rimsky Korsakoff's opera to be performed as written. Well, the whole Russian Navy had just been destroyed in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. As for the "singers ranged on either side of the stage in oratorio fashion," that idea had already been used by Gordon Craig. In June 1914, Diaghilev, Ricketts, Craig, Kessler, Parisians and Londoners at large, could still laugh at the antics of out-of-touch monarchs and their silly diplomats. The Great War began in August. Is it *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* all over again?

Books, programs, photographs, posters and ephemera concerning "Dancing Divas & Danseurs Nobles" such as Anna Pavlova, Ida Rubinstein, Vaslav Nijinsky, Leonide Massine, Serge Lifar, and others were on view at the Book Club from January 24 to the end of March, 2005. Just what is a *danseur noble*? He is the male equivalent of a ballerina, the fellow who, as in the ballets of Marius Petipa, partners the "étoile." And, apropos of Ricketts's admiration for Tamara Karsavina, her dancing roles were admirably pictured by the wonderful Art Deco artist George Barbier in *Album Dédié A Tamar Karsavina*, 1914, and in Valerien Svetlov's fabulous *Thamar Karsavina*, 1922, published by Cyril W. Beaumont and hand painted by Claude Lovat Fraser, with pochoirs by Randolph Schwabe, Glyn Philpot, A. P. Allison,

Natalia Gontcharova, Ludwig Kainer, John Singer Sargent, Valentin Seroff, Pablo Picasso, and others.

Tamara Karsavina might have been Diaghilev's favourite prima ballerina, but she never became *prima ballerina assoluta*. In Imperial Russia the rank of *prima ballerina assoluta* was bestowed on just two dancers. One was Mathilda Kschessinska, the first Russian ballerina to discover the secret of the thirty-two fouettés. Kschessinska may have been the mistress of Tsar Nicholas II. After the 1917 Revolution, she became the morganatic wife of Nicholas's cousin, the Grand Duke Andrei. Their son, Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilov Romanov, was, until his recent demise, heir presumptive to the Russian Imperial throne. At fifty-seven, Kschessinska opened a ballet school in Paris. At sixty-four, she performed at London's Covent Garden. Her memoirs, *Dancing In St. Petersburg: The Memoirs Of Kschessinska* by H. S. H. The Princess Romanovsky-Krassinsky, published in London in 1960, tell all about Russian Imperial glamour. At the exhibition we had a copy complete with a signed dedication. Mathilda Kschessinska died at ninety-nine in 1971. San Francisco ballerina Janet Sasson-Upton tells of going to Paris when she was merely fifteen to take classes with the great Russian *prima ballerina assoluta*. What did she learn? Mrs. Sasson-Upton says that Kschessinska taught her how to bow gracefully to Grand Dukes and Imperial Highnesses.

Some of the "Dancing Divas" whose books and letters were on exhibition have a special connection to San Francisco. Isadora Duncan, for example, born at what was, before April 1906, 55 Geary Street, was represented by Frederika Blair's excellent biography, translated into Japanese by San Francisco Duncan dancer and choreographer Mary Sano. Maud Allan, possibly the daughter of San Francisco mayor Adolph Sutro, grew up here but made her dancing



debut in Vienna in 1903 as Salome. Arnold Genthe included Miss Allan in his comprehensive *The Book of the Dance*, 1916, one of the first books so lavishly illustrated by photographs, even some in color.

Very few people now remember seeing Ruth St. Denis dance. In 1920 her friend and partner, Ted Shawn, wrote, John Henry Nash printed, and John Howell published what is probably the most lavish of all books chronicling an American dancer: *Ruth St. Denis: Pioneer & Prophet: Being a History of Her Cycle of Oriental Dances*. Of the two magnificent volumes, the second one includes many tipped-in photographs by the most outstanding photographers of the time. William Rauschnabel designed the initials, headpieces, and frontispiece borders in the style of William Morris. The edition of three hundred and fifty copies signed by Ted Shawn and Ruth St. Denis is now quite rare. To our grandparents' generation, "Miss Ruth" was a "modern heroine" who, after dancing all over the world, established her school in California, saying always "I belong to America."

And speaking of "Dancing Divas," who can forget Kyra Nijinsky, the elder daughter of that great *danseur noble*, Vaslav. Kyra was born in London a few days after the premiere of *Le Coq d'Or*, who, Kyra said, must have sung quite loudly at her birth. Kyra identified so strongly with her father that she refused to attend dance class unless wearing one of his shirts. During the 1930s, she performed the leading roles in *Le Spectre de la Rose* and *Après-Midi d'un Faune* with London's Ballet Rambert. (What ever became of Vaslav's last two shirts, which Kyra said she was saving for her old, old age?)

Having tea at Kyra's tiny apartment on Ulloa Street, I was told the story of how she managed to escape from a Nazi concentration camp. She told it without anger, as if it had been just a commonplace incident in a life full of adventure. From 1954 to 1984 Kyra lived here, a talented painter, poet, and uninhibited personality often seen holding court at San Francisco's Opera House. The caricature made of Kyra Nijinska by Nicholas Legat, the last great Imperial Russian choreographer, as well as a photograph by Cecil Beaton of a young, glamorous Kyra in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, were included in the exhibition.

And finally, Leonide Massine, the young Moscow dancer who replaced Vaslav Nijinsky as Diaghilev's leading *danseur noble* and became one of the great *caractère* dancers of the twentieth century. Readers of the *Quarterly* may remember seeing Leonide Massine's performance in the 1955 film *The Red Shoes*. When Massine was in his seventies and eighties, though he had his own lovely island, Galli in the Bay of Capri, he traveled the world teaching



and re-staging the ballets he had created for Diaghilev in the 1910s and 1920s. He came a few times to the Bay Area to stage *La Boutique Fantasque*, *Gaité Parisienne*, and *The Snow Maiden* for the Oakland Ballet. He was a small, seemingly frail man with huge, intensely dark eyes. One day, at the dance studio of Carol Teten in Kentfield, Leonide Massine told me how, during the summer of 1914, Isadora Duncan had taught him to dance the tango. At that time, Massine said, Isadora was still married to millionaire Paris Singer and lived in a fabulous mansion in Monte Carlo overlooking the sea.

"She came out into the balcony where Diaghilev and I were drinking champagne cocktails," said Massine. "I was only seventeen years old then. For me, Isadora Duncan was already a legend – we revered her in Russia. And here she was, standing in front of me – a golden diva in white chiffon and diamonds. Isadora looked down at me quizzically and said, 'Let's dance, my petit.' Serge Diaghilev was not at all amused and scowled at her. Isadora threw back her head and laughed at him as if he had been a clown in a circus. As diplomatically as possible, Serge Diaghilev – 'Big Serge,' as we called him – just walked away. Then Isadora said 'Come into my arms – my petit.' Together we danced the tango until the sun went down into the sea."

That, dear friends, must be what they meant by glamour.

Dr. Adela Spindler Roatcap teaches Art History at the University of San Francisco

In Memoriam Muir Dawson

by Jeremy C. Cole

In February of this year, the Book Club lost one of its most prominent members, former president Muir Dawson, who also served on the Club's Board and took part in many Club activities.

Born in Los Angeles, he was the fourth child of Ernest and Sadie Dawson. He was a champion skier, and during World War II served with the mountain artillery, teaching soldiers to ski. After the war, he studied printing at Scripps College while getting a degree from Pomona College in 1949.

His father had opened a bookshop in 1905 on South Broadway in what was then central Los Angeles. His older brother, Glen, joined the firm in 1936, and Muir became a partner in 1947. Together with Jake Zeitlin and Harry Levinson, the Dawsons are credited with making Los Angeles a center for the rare book trade equal to New York and Chicago. Muir built the shop's position in fine printing and the book arts. He was particularly interested in the work of nineteenth-century English wood engraver Thomas Bewick. Books on printing history and art from Japan were also added. The shop became known nationwide for its catalogues and books on California history and Western Americana. The firm published 383 books and items of ephemera between 1906 and 2003. Muir retired in 1995, leaving the shop to his son, Michael.

Muir and his wife, Agnes, loved to travel to book meetings, book fairs, and book tours around the world. In retirement, he continued his home printing and research on a book about Bewick's blocks, which he previewed for us and two English Bewick experts in London last year. He always kept his eye out for books to add to his collecting interests. He said, "I think that if a seller isn't collecting, there's something dead in him. You've got to have the passion for books."

Muir was missed at the 100th anniversary celebration of Dawson's Book Shop in April of 2005.

My Friend and Fellow Printer, Vance Gerry

Vance Gerry died on March 5, 2005, age 75. This is adapted from a eulogy delivered at a memorial service held in Pasadena on March 11.

by Patrick Reagh

Our meeting, at the Rounce & Coffin Club in 1978, is still a vivid memory. We knew a little about each other before that. I had been working at the Plantin Press and was in the process of starting my own shop. Vance had been printing on his own for some time and alternated between that and working in the animation department at the Walt Disney Studios. Other printers used to tease Vance that he only went back to Disney when he needed money to support his printing habit.

We hit it off immediately. Within minutes our conversation was peppered with words like *recto*, *verso*, *folio*, *Bembo*, *Bodoni*, *Poliphilus*, and the always seductive *pochoir*. It must have been love at first sight, for we were making printers' pillow talk.

To add to our mutual admiration, we discovered that we both loved jazz music, although I soon learned that our respective tastes were about four decades apart. Vance confessed that he named his Weather Bird Press after a 1928 recording of *Weatherbird Rag* by Louis Armstrong. Later, when we worked together, we agreed to set the radio dial somewhere between Jelly Roll Morton and John Coltrane.

Within months, our new-found friendship led us to consider the possibility of combining our efforts, as well as tons of used machinery (which Vance described as "impedimenta"). The theory was that we could accomplish more and create better work as a team. I was also planning at the time to purchase the machinery from the Plantin Press as its business wound down. The Plantin machines were state-of-the-art letterpress, hardly impedimenta. Once when I used "state-of-the-art" in one of the many promotional pieces we never printed, Vance objected, "Can't we avoid using terms like 'state-of-the-art' and 'cutting edge'?" "What could we say that means the same thing?" I asked. "How about 'felicitous'?" he replied. I let Vance write all the copy after that.

We decided it might be prudent to have a trial marriage: Vance agreed to come down to my little shop on 9th and Union Street and work alongside me. Thus began our Odd Couple relationship. I had been trained at the

highly organized Plantin Press; Vance was, well, an artist. The first day he was there, I went out for a while. When I returned Vance was at the press, paper littered the floor, tools were scattered on the countertops, and there stood Vance, nonchalant amid the debris. I bit my lip and hinted sarcastically that tool racks and wastebaskets sometimes served a useful purpose.

Vance and I easily learned to accommodate each other's work habits, and we decided to consummate our business relationship. We rented a warehouse in Glendale large enough for all our impedimenta, along with the Plantin Press equipment.

In a rare moment of practical business sense we agreed that it would be a good idea to have some partnership papers drawn up. So we found a law intern from Loyola College who would prepare these as part of her education and, most importantly, *pro bono*. She was quite meticulous and produced a long document with terms like "Whereas the party of the aforementioned" and "In the case of said grievance." She handed it to us with the admonition that we should go over it carefully from beginning to end, sign it, and file it with the city. We took it back to the shop, read a few paragraphs aloud and, with eyes glazed over, stuck it in a drawer never to be seen again.

So we went to work in our new shop. Jobs came in and we hired a few people and we were two happy printers. Business was steady enough that we even hired a bookkeeper, Vance's wife, Mary. In a mere two hours a week, she excelled at making order out of the chaos we created. Vance catalogued the more substantial work we printed that first year in *Weather Bird*, his occasional newsletter, issue number 8.

At the end of 1981, after we had worked together on a daily basis for about a year, Vance told me he wanted to go his own way. At the time I took it personally. I thought Vance might have found me difficult to work with, or was disappointed in the commercial direction we were taking. Maybe it was the fifty dollars a week we were drawing in salary. I just didn't know. In retrospect, I realize that Vance was truly an artist and didn't do his best work when making the concessions necessary to please a demanding and fickle clientele. Freed from those constraints he went on to do some of his finest work. Fortunately for me, we continued to collaborate on many projects and, more importantly, we remained good friends. To me, Vance Gerry was somewhere between a father figure and the older brother I never had.

Vance was a private, occasionally reclusive, man. But everyone who knew him couldn't help being charmed by his gentle wit and unique talent. He

had a quality that combined an ageless wisdom with a childlike view of the world – a sensibility that is apparent in his art. Southern California printers and book collectors all over the world cherish the whimsical books and pamphlets that Vance created at his Weather Bird Press. Much of the press's work was written, designed, illustrated, and printed by Vance himself. He revived the technique of pochoir illustration and became one of its leading exponents. Revered by bibliophiles, he was held in equal esteem by the animation world as an emeritus story developer at Disney Studios.

Farewell to my friend Vance Gerry. You will be missed.

Reviews

DRAWN WEST

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Chandler

Drawn West: Selections from the Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection of Early Californian and Western Art and Americana from The Bancroft Library by Jack Von Euw and Genoa Shepley. Berkeley: The Bancroft Library and Heyday Books, 2004. Xiv, 197, notes, index to artists and plates. 117 color illustrations. \$39.95; hardcover.

Strangely, for the premier historical manuscript repository on the west coast, the Robert Broadhead Honeyman, Junior, Collection has no history. Honeyman, (1897-1987), a Southern California mining engineer, collected books and art privately; he did not associate with others of his ilk, like, say the famed Zamarano Club. All known is that from the late 1930s through the 1950s, Honeyman assembled an eclectic collection of more than two thousand pieces of Western art.

He garnered that which was produced out West and that which reflected eastern and European ideas about Western life. His collecting included everything from sheets out of *Harper's Weekly* to oil paintings. In 1963, the Friends of The Bancroft Library seized the opportunity to add the first purely visual collection to The Bancroft holdings. As this well-designed, colorful book shows, Californians should be glad.

Jack Van Euw and Genoa Shepley propose, through a "visual cross section of the West," to "deepen our understanding of the perceptions, as well as the needs and desires, of people encountering this new land for the first time." They have chosen well, and arranged pieces chronologically by theme.

Their six chapters in this eleven-inch square volume ably lay out the arrangement: "Inhabitants and Travelers" offers "a kaleidoscopic view of the encounters, clashes, integration, and disintegration of the peoples of the American West." "The Land Beheld" traces "an arc from topographic to romantic, from sublime to picturesque, and from wilderness to civilization." "By Land, By Sea" immigrants "came for the promise of wealth, for a new beginning, or simply for the weather."

"Incident and Accident" pits "humans against the forces of nature, against technology, and against each other." "Enterprise" hints at "the diversity and the complexities of the economy" and the cooperative means needed to harness it. Lastly, "Wonder and Curiosity" affords viewers "the experience of awe and delight that early explorers must have felt on encountering the wonders of the American West."

All one hundred seventeen illustrations are in color; all are clearly reproduced and large. Compare the same three early Indian drawings in *Drawn West* to the reproductions in Claire Perry's fine *Pacific Arcadia: Images of California 1600-1915* (1999), which portrays an equal range of printed material and fine art. This companion to a Stanford University exhibit does not possess clear prints. Illustrating that good art has unlimited appeal, read the differing commentary. (*Pacific Arcadia*, 13-17; *Drawn West*, 4, 7-10).

According to *Pacific Arcadia*, the middle and upper classes deliberately manipulated California's image. "For large numbers of Anglo-Americans to be willing to make their home in the Golden State, its nature had to be defined according to certain prototypes, and its past and future revised and invented by those who stood to benefit from an increased population" (xii).

Would that it were so easy! All advertising campaigns would be successes. Unless something reflects the national psyche, it goes nowhere. Anyone remember New Coke?

Yet this interpretation has become fashionable. When it popped up as the motivating force in Rebecca Solnit's *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (2003), I stopped reading. In *Drawn West*, it appears as a diluted derivative that capitalists and settlement are bad.

An annoying element of "political correctness" pervades the commentary, as if the nineteenth-century artists did not draw what the twenty-first century curators wished. Why are the Argonauts of the Days of '49 "infamous"? Is it really "insidious" to advertise "the grandeur and limitless resources of this land," instead of "portraying the ugly effects of develop-

ment”? “For many now it [the railroad] represents the final deflation of the indigenous social structure of the West by the long needles of American industrialization and imperialism.” Is this so?

This reviewer now enters into a real fuss, not over this well-structured work, but over the general system of captions in the art world, which this book, and *Pacific Arcadia*, most unfortunately use. This current style gives only author, title, date, medium, and size.

Often the title is abbreviated and not explanatory. “Print on paper,” or “painting on board,” tells the obvious and is the most useless information presented. This form of caption is merely inventory information. Incorporate it into the similar Index to Artists and Plates.

The greatest disservice to viewers is in dating. Van Euw and Shepley do well with paintings, but not printed materials. Too many are just designated “1800s.” Virtually all of this collection is nineteenth century! Certainly the resources of the unequaled Bancroft Library could assign a decade. Art did not remain static; attitudes did change between 1850 and 1900.

Page 84 bears the caption, “U.S. Steamer *Golden Gate*, c. 1800s.” Information from the print itself and a search on “Google” dates it precisely: It is from Charles Beebe Stuart’s *The Naval and Mail Steamers of the United States* (1853). The print shows the steamer early in her career and carrying a rig quite different from that pictured on page 113.

On facing page 85 is a Panama-printed dinner menu from the *PMSS Constitution*, Wednesday, December 9, captioned “c. 1860s.” A perpetual calendar and city directory chronology fixes it to a northbound trip in 1868. The accompanying text declares that the menu “tells a one-sided story” of luxury for those who could afford “fares from \$600 for first-class” passengers. This leads into a longer account from historian J.H. Kemble on the horrid life for those in steerage.

Yet, the only year a fare as high as \$600 might have existed was 1849. In 1868, according to Kemble, fares dropped to \$50 when the Opposition was running, and then rose to \$200 in 1869, when there was no competition. Menu choices of “Pigs Head” and “Heart Minced with Eggs on Toast” show how tastes have changed – I do not expect to see them served at a BCC book party – that the ships carried live food, and that nothing went to waste.

Later in *Drawn West*, pages 176 to 180 vividly illustrate Louis Jules Rupalley’s 1850s fascination with California’s critters and plants – but Shepley identifies none. One watercolor plate shows three butterflies and

three moths; the next a weird-looking, prickly-podded green vine. [Editor's note: This is most likely *Marah fabaceus*, family Cucurbitaceae, common name manroot or wild cucumber.]

The star attraction, which appears also on the back dust jacket, is another "untitled," but actually the unforgettable snow-plant (*Sarcodes sanguinea*). In 1887, water-colorist Emma Homan Thayer, in her *Wild Flowers of the Pacific Coast*, found these striking plants that bloom as the snow begins to melt at 4,000 to 9,000 feet to be "little monuments of red ice glistening in the sunshine." Coming upon a snow-plant while hiking has enthralled me.

An irrelevant caption dampens excitement for an illustration. Where is the fire that the curator felt when he chose the item for inclusion? What should a viewer, who does not have the insight of this curator, discover and take away? A few pithy sentences form an unequaled opportunity to inform.

In summation, more attention to detail would have made a good book better. Praise Honeyman for being "Drawn West," The Bancroft Library for recognizing the collection's value, and Heyday Books, Jack Von Euw, and Genoa Shepley for producing it.

THREE FROM OHIO

Reviewed by Richard H. Dillon

H.L. Mencken is as fascinating a writer as he is irritating as a cynic. Is he collected today? He should be. (But this reviewer knows of only one Book Clubber who was a collector of Menckeniana, the late David Belch.)

The Baltimore journalist turned himself into a national gadfly, heaping criticism and abuse on his countrymen; indeed, on all aspects of American culture, not excluding its literature. From Ohio University Press in Athens come two interesting books on this curmudgeon. The first is *Mencken's America* (\$22.95), edited by S.T. Joshi.

The book is a sampling of Mencken's general essays, largely uncollected until now, from newspapers and, particularly, his own magazines, *Smart Set* and *American Mercury*. He takes on the moralizing of Americans, their religion and politics, and their habitat. Baltimore still held some of its old charm when he wrote, around World War I, but the only civilized city in the Union was San Francisco.

Mencken seldom had a good word for America, although he considered the U. S. to be better off than any other country. The ranting German-American

considered the States to lie under the curse of Puritanism. Hence its bogus morality, its prudery, censorship, Prohibition, anti-art philistinism, &c, &c. All of this evil was facilitated (or so he said) by a gaggle of knaves in high places in Washington, lording it over the citizenry, who were “sniveling serfs.”

Some of us today have a New York City-like love/hate relationship with H.L.M. He was a brave and useful critic of our country’s flip side, and some of his warnings are still valid – about the power of Big Money and its lobbyists in Washington, for example, or the tendency of Americans to “reason” with emotion rather than thought. But, while he claimed to revere freedom, he was distrustful of democracy. He was insensitive toward Jews and African Americans (consistently calling the latter “blackamoors”), and he favored the Kaiser’s Germany over the Allies in World War I.

Too much exposure to Mencken’s hyperbole and overblown prose in general (he never met a metaphor he didn’t like) may give you a figurative, at least, migraine. But, taken in small dosages, his criticism is probably healthy for us, especially now, since the ultra-conservative turn of post-Clintonian America.

The second book from Ohio University Press will especially appeal to Book Clubbers. It is *H. L. Mencken on American Literature* (\$44.95), also edited by S.T. Joshi.

Mencken was just as critical in these book reviews – actually, good-sized literary essays from *Smart Set* and *American Mercury* – as in his general commentary. He is, perhaps, a little less savage with fellow-writers than with dubious preachers and politicians. And, *mirabile visu!*, he displays his literary likes as well as his dislikes, which makes for more pleasant reading.

By the time of World War I, Mencken was the “discoverer” of neglected Mark Twain as our greatest writer and *Huckleberry Finn* as this country’s literary masterpiece. He also helped “discover” Walt Whitman, but missed Herman Melville and *Moby Dick*.

Just as important, he was in the fore in welcoming the advent of serious, realistic fiction. As he supported realism, he denounced the “mush” of sentiment, moralizing, and bogus uplift in the popular fiction of his day, which descended from the genteel tradition of New England’s pioneer literary men, like Emerson and Whittier. At the same time, he deplored the equally popular red-blooded (but mediocre) “men’s novels” of Rex Beach, Richard Harding Davis, and James Oliver Curwood. Interestingly, he excepted Jack

London. In fact, he probably over-praised the Sonoman's style while regretting his half-baked socialist and other "messages."

The Baltimorean became the most respected (and feared) of literary critics and a sort of cheerleader for the new breed of realist novelists – Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Willa Cather, and James Branch Cabell. He preferred Fitzgerald to Hemingway and was too early for Steinbeck. Alas, he considered San Francisco's own "Mencken," Ambrose Bierce, to be only a "worthy second-rater." As for Gertrude Atherton, he found her entertaining as a writer, but "insubstantial," and not even present in his second rank of American writers.

Joshi has added a very useful "Glossary of Names" to both Mencken books. These are mini-biographies of individuals whom he has mentioned in passing. Many will be unfamiliar now, even to a literate public.

The third volume from Ohio resembles the attractive books that we expect from Delaware's Oak Knoll Press, some of them products of cooperation with English institutions like the British Library. Titled *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Words and Image*, the (\$44.95) book, well-illustrated in black and white, plus a few color plates, is by Julia Thomas, a Welsh academic.

In her scholarly study, the author explores bookish "connections" of the Victorian years in the United Kingdom. She demonstrates that these Victorians were practically obsessed by images as advances were made in printing. These included the presence of both words and pictures on the same page of a book. Just when a plethora of illustrated titles was being published, narrative paintings and prints began to decorate the walls of English homes.

Thomas compares and contrasts these two aspects of British mid-nineteenth century pictorial (or visual) culture as she explores the relationship between word and picture. The interplay between the two overlapping genres blurred the line between the visual and the textual, and offers us clues to the Victorians' very images of themselves.

Among the interesting pictures in this study is the "take" on crinolines by Punch and by artist John E. Millais; also the illustration of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. A long and very thorough section is devoted to one of America's early best-sellers published in England, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. British editions were illustrated with wood engravings by no less an artist than George Cruikshank.

Serendipity

With great sadness, we report the passing of a giant among Book Club of California members: Mike Harrison, 107, (December 13, 1897-April 5, 2005); the man who lived in Three Centuries!

In 1960, Mike and Maggie Harrison built a home/library at Fair Oaks to house over twenty thousand books, pamphlets, and printed whatever on the West. Mike developed his own cataloging system, the Harrison Peculiar System (hereafter HPS). Its 700 thousand typed cards answer the question "where" to all inquiring minds. Until age 105, Harrison continued acquiring, cataloguing, and welcoming researchers to spend the night to be ready EARLY the next morning to start afresh.

Our wife, Susan, always laughed when reading Maggie's memoir; how could she NOT have a proper dining room? Maggie, though, was an accessory to the crime of creeping collectionism; she was an exceedingly accomplished hand bookbinder. As books and shelves send tendrils through OUR house, Sue no longer sees the humor. She moved once due to what she termed too many books, and we, not enough of them.

Mike and Maggie had no acknowledged direct heirs [details on unacknowledged ones follow] and donated their home with its incredible library to UC Davis. The prime reason for the gift? ANY scholar was a child of Mike and Maggie.

That is how we met Mike. In 1979, we wrote an article for *Arizona and the West* – a journal which Mike saw rise and disappear – on California's 1863 Loyalty Oath. Mike found our address, wrote a warm letter, and initiated a stimulating, long-time correspondence.

Members of the BCC became Mike's intimate family. We knew Past President Harrison as a conscientious Director, who put into practice the HPS (see above). With his usual sparseness of words, coupled with great humor, Harrison would slowly and deliberately quiz long-time Treasurer John Borden on Club finances.

This concern was truly fatherly. Where DNA and other scientific methods failed, spirit-rapping revealed that indeed Mr. Borden was Mr. Harrison's "illegitimate son." The question Director Harrison inevitably asked was, "Did Mr. Borden have any further trips planned to Greenland"–coupled with the suggestion that the books ought to be audited.

An obvious relationship, in spirit if not fact, is that Director Vince Lozito is Mike's adopted son. The two were devoted. Particularly during the last years when times were rough for Mike, Vince came daily, always helping. God Bless You, Vince, for your love to our remarkable Mike!

One last legacy remains: Mike's Bar. When the Roxburghe Club met in BCC rooms, sober Mike kept the swells from swilling all Club assets. On Monday evenings and at gala book appearances, Mike's Bar is open for the enjoyment of patrons.

Readers by now have noticed that we have added REAL writers to our column, our Southern California correspondents. They communicate interesting items and have our gratitude. Printer Peter Koch gave this glorious change front page billing: "Meanderings by Robert J. Chandler, a Southern California Note from Michael Thompson, and more." Part of the "more" that koched our eye, was above – Richard Wagener's fine wood engraving of a bristlecone pine. Koch and Wagener cover us well.

While setting pen to paper, figuratively that is, on All Fools' Day, we were rewarded by seeing that we talk like Elmer Fudd and walk like a penguin. The former came about since we were not correctly projecting our voice. For the latter, we admit, we were helped along by increased film speed. We appeared on the Travel Channel's "Once & Future City" narrated by San Francisco historian talking head Charles Fracchia – another BCC-ite.

A year ago March 5, it seems, your esteemed (?) scrivener led red-shirted miners (?) from the sanctum of brewmeister Allen Paul's watering hole at Columbus and Pacific to the post-Quake houses of horizontal happiness on Commercial Street and back again... Ah, for the experience of seeing how others see us!

For something equally unusual, a nicely designed and sculpted "Gay Dollar" appeared in February as a "Two Proc" coin. "Heads" depicts "Empress José, the Widow Norton." In 1961, José Sarria became the first gay man to run for office in the United States—as all readers knew instantly, a seat on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Today, Sarria, 82, will be the senior Grand Marshal in the Bay City's June Gay Pride Parade.

"Her" Imperial Court emerged in 1965 and spread nationwide as an organization and fund-raiser for homosexual causes. This year, Empress José decreed that a coin be struck in commemoration of her Court's fortieth anniversary.

Just as imperial bond printers John Cuddy and Edward C. Hughes became "Printers to His Majesty, Norton I" in 1870, so in 2005 designer Nan

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Marine artist William A. Coulter, spring 1898

Norstad is “Minter to Her Majesty.” Her coin, slightly larger than a Standard U.S. silver dollar, sells for \$9.95; gaydollarsf.com has further information.

“Tails” shows Joshua Abraham Norton standing by the properly named “Emperor Norton Bridge.” To take effect on April 1, Empress José proclaimed “that the Legislature and Governor of the State of California shall forthwith name the transbay bridge between San Francisco and Oakland ‘The Emperor Norton Bridge,’ thereby appropriately memorializing its true conceiver, a man who has become part of the mythic lore of California, and thusly, my late husband.”

March 10 found us in the Merchants Exchange admiring the 16 by 18-foot murals by marine artist William Alexander Coulter. BCC member Linda Kahn heads the eponymous Paul and Linda Kahn Foundation that leads a “search for the lost art of W.A. Coulter.” Readers who own Coulters painted between 1874 and 1936, please contact Kahn at 2430 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94115-1238. She and Coulter’s grandson Thomas would like to compile a list of survivors from fire and time.

Curator Marcus De Chevreux will assemble the best done by an artist born in the Gold Rush year of ’49, who captured the San Francisco waterfront as no one else has. The Coulter exhibit will open on the Earthquake Day Centennial (for non-San Franciscans, April 18, 2006) at the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park’s Visitor Center in the 1907 brick Haslett Warehouse, SE corner, Hyde and Jefferson streets.

Linda’s late husband, Paul, assembled a wonderful collection of Hawaiiana, which in 1991 became part of the state collections. BCC member and author David W. Forbes mined it for his now-standard four-volume *Hawaiian*

National Bibliography 1780-1900, published by the University of Hawaii Press in connection with Sydney's Hordern House [I: 1780-1830 (1999); II: 1831-1850 (2000); III: 1851-1880 (2001); and IV: 1881-1900 (2003)]

Furthermore, Forbes edited the Book Club's 1991 *A Pictorial Tour of Hawaii 1850-1852: Watercolors, Paintings & Drawings by James Gay Sawkins*. He is at present finishing a BCC offering on famed San Francisco lithographers Joseph Britton & Jacques Joseph Rey.

BCC member Stuart Bennett's gracefully written book is remarkable. His *Trade Bookbinding in the British Isles, 1660-1800* (New Castle, Delaware, and London: Oak Knoll Press and the British Library, 2004; \$85) is readily available at past BCC President John Crichton's Brick Row Book Shop. In it Bennett takes on the shibboleth developed in the 1990s that booksellers sold works primarily in sheets to be bound by the purchaser. He similarly demolishes a scholar's decree from the 1930s that the only original bindings were wrappers and boards.

Book binders are the featured craftsmen. The seventeenth century certainly increased opportunities for creativity, as shelving changed from fore-edges out to spines out.

Yet, our fine hand binders will wince at their inferior place four hundred years ago, sandwiched between printers and booksellers. In 1675, Richard Head, in his delightfully titled *Proteus Redivivus, or The Art of Wheedling*, remarked how any good man in the trade "scornes the mean Title of a Bookbinder," and yearns to be "henceforward stil'd a Bookseller."

With examples from his own collection, as well as from major libraries, Bennett concludes that "over eighty percent of the books in the British Isles were sold ready-bound" and in leather. Furthermore, the practice originated over a century before his title date: "Once established in the [early] sixteenth century, the sale of ready-bound books was the mainstay of the English retail book trade."

Bennett's conclusions arise from a thorough examination of advertisements, trade lists, and bound books. His specimens are novels, the lowest common denominator of the book trade, accounting for the most sales at the cheapest prices. Their bindings, therefore, are the quickest finished, most practical, and the least expensive. Bennett hints at commonalities that allow dating of contemporary bindings, and best of all, entices scholars to further research.

This nicely designed work is appropriately set in Richard Austin's 1788 font designed for London bookseller John Bell, which the Riverside Press of Cambridge – Massachusetts, that is – called "English Copperplate." After the House of Lords abolished perpetual copyright in 1774, Bell issued sets of English classics, including Shakespeare and Chaucer, in his own distinctive decorative leather bindings.

When *Chronicle* reviewer David Kipin, "The Page Turner," wrote of *Drawn West*, reviewed by ourself elsewhere in this issue, his "page turner" was elsewhere: "The best book of California art I've ever seen is still *California Calls You* by Gary and KD Kurutz [Sausalito: Windgate Press, 2000], who managed to recuperate the reputations of an entire generation of lost California promotional artists. The new book might have profited particularly by the example of that one's thumbnail biographies, which were themselves models of the miniaturist's tantalizing art."

As *California Calls You* has drained our pocket book as funds flow out to acquire pamphlets mentioned therein, we shun giving credit to the head of the publications committee and bestow it all upon his lovely and brainy wife.... "Miniaturist's tantalizing art," eh? So that is why Mr. Kurutz is always in such demand to write BCC keepsakes!

On a more verbose scale, Kurutz's compilation of champagne-consuming Ben Truman's stagecoaching tales will soon appear under the BCC's imprint, while his first book, a charming biography of raconteur Truman, is still available—and at the BCC's sale price. Prepare for a great Twoferone buy!

While on notices from the press, we saw a puff for a San Francisco exhibit that closed April 3: "Extraordinary Exhibitions: Broad sides from the Collection of Ricky Jay." Handbills from the seventeenth through nineteenth century proclaiming exotic and freak shows excited TV actor, theater director, radio personality, author, and magician Ricky Jay.

See Jay's *Journal of Anomalies: Conjurers, Cheats, Hustlers, Hoaxsters, Pranksters, Jokesters, Imposters, Pretenders, Side-Show Showmen, Armless Calligraphers, Mechanical Marvels, Popular Entertainments* (2001), a gathering of the sixteen issues of his quarterly, for his greatest discoveries. His book *Extraordinary Exhibitions*, which will be released by the time this QN-L appears, has the broadsides themselves.

Why do we bother to mention all of this sleight-of-hand? Jay declares that his "favorite printer" rhymes with "Jay;" that is, of course, Patrick

Reagh. Every two years, as all reaghders of the QN-L reaghlize, he becomes our favorite printer, too!

We are not much for poetry; doggerel is the best we can do. For the true muse, though, Heyday Books threw a poetry reading on Sunday, January 16, to launch *The Addison Street Anthology* (2004: \$14.95 paper). Edited by former national Poet Laureate Robert Hass and Berkeley Prof Jessica Fisher, it augments the one hundred twenty-six poetic panels set in Addison Street sidewalks. Of course, four hundred attendees sang “Puff the Magic Dragon” along with songwriter Lenny Lipton. Outside the Berkeley Repertory Theater, a women protested the forty reading poets “for supporting the raising of property values for rich people by pimping poetry.” Perhaps the East Bay is so ignorant about His Majesty Emperor Norton I because it has Berkeley.

The Great Central Valley, the vegetable and fruit capital of the world, has, does, and will continue to inspire writers. In 2001, Heyday Books launched a whole series of “Great Valley Books” seeking to “promote the rich literary, artistic, and cultural resources” of that distinct locale.

One series volume by David Mas Masumoto is *Letters to the Valley: A Harvest of Memories* (2004; \$19.95). His grandfather arrived from Japan in 1899; his grandmother a year later. Counting his children, four generations have been farm laborers and farm owners.

His Dad, back from the Gila River Relocation Camp, bought the eighty-acre family farm in 1948. On it Masumoto organically raises sweet Sun Crest peaches, with a shelf life of only a week, but a taste that lasts a lifetime, and Thompson seedless raisin grapes.

This book began as a newspaper column, which quite naturally polinated this project. Why? The paper is the Fresno Bee. It consists of Masumoto’s fictional letters to his extended family: grandmother, parents, children, and neighbors.

After all, “a good column is like writing a letter to a friend,” he says, “capturing observations and feeling, sharing them with others so they may be read and reread.” Masumoto states clearly, “In addition to peaches and grapes, I grow family stories.”

Masumoto’s past works set the themes: *Epitaph for a Peach: Four Seasons on My Family Farm* (1995); *Harvest Son: Planting Roots in American Soil* (1999); and *Four Seasons in Five Senses: Things Worth Savoring* (2003).

His writing in *Letters* has the dance of poetry – and it danced out of my hands as wife Susan’s fingers grasped the leading fore edge to snatch it for reading.

Doug Hansen’s art, originally paired with Masumoto’s column in the *Bee*, carries its flavor. A professor in Graphic Design at Fresno State University, his love for the Central Valley equals Masumoto’s. See Hansen’s *Fresno Sketchbook: Sixty-five Drawings of Fresno, Favorite Places and the Beauty of the Unexpected* (1991); and *Fresno Sketchbook: One Hundred Drawings of Fresno, Everyday Places* (1993).

Masumoto’s comments concerning his publisher cannot be blamed on us! (We just agree.) Masumoto writes, “Heyday is a very special place – an oasis, an island – in the sea of books and publishing, a place where writing can be fun. Malcolm Margolin has become the friend all writers hope for, with stimulating conversations and a love of books, words and stories.”

We usually address Margolin as “Joaquin Miller,” because of his wild and white unkempt beard. Imagine our delight in October 2004 when Heyday Books issued a thirty-year anniversary eight-page accordion-fold keepsake. Four pages of Zak Nelson’s cartoons really reveal how Margolin zestfully spends his days. On the reverse, the “Official Timeline of Heyday Books (not to scale)” traces the growth of that wonderful beard.

We again turn to art collectors among our readers – certainly not bibliomaniacs, as all wall space should and WILL be filled with shelves. After all, the Antiquarian Book Fair of February 18-20 is past and UC Berkeley has set a pattern to emulate after acquiring its ten millionth book.

Museums around the country are disposing of their large vertical vinyl or canvas street exhibition advertisements through betterwall.com of Denver. Soon up are 2004 banners from the Palace of the Legion of Honor exhibit “Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya” and the Asian Art Museum’s “Geisha: Beyond the Painted Smile.” SFMOMA is considering joining up, Leah Garchik noted on February 11. Prices range from \$350 to \$900; the museums get a percentage of profit. We do not wish to see any BCC members climbing lamp posts before exhibits end.

Poppies profusely popping; prancing and parading pompously. This First of April is much too nice a spring day to be writing a “col’m,” as the editor calls our musings.



The American Printing History Association will hold its annual conference, [r]Evolution in Print: New Work in Printing History & Practice, September 22-23, 2005. The conference will convene at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel in San Francisco and continue the next day at Mills College in Oakland. Program Committee Chair Kathleen Walkup of Mills College and other scholars and professionals in the field are planning numerous activities; for information, email apha2005@mills.edu or telephone (510) 430-2047.

Two exhibits of special interest:

A Heavenly Craft: The Woodcut in Early Printed Books, Library of Congress, through July 9, 2005.

Lasting Impressions: The Private Presses of New Mexico, Santa Fe, Palace of the Governors, February 18, 2005 to February 7, 2007.

Seminar Scholarships

The Book Club is supporting the Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar this year by funding five scholarships. The seminar takes place in Colorado Springs, August 7 through 12, 2005. For details, check www.bookseminar.com

A special note for visitors to San Francisco...

The Monticello Inn, at 127 Ellis Street, hosts book events every Wednesday from 5:30 to 7. These often feature local writers, who read from their work and answer questions; refreshments are served. Club members from nearby as well as hotel guests are welcome. For more information and the schedule, check www.monticelloinn.com

Gifts & Acquisitions

Matrix 24 has arrived from the Whittington Press of John and Rose Randle and contains several articles of interest to Club members. Dr. Adela Spindler Roatcap contributed an article on pochoir; artist-member Charles Hobson delved into "maps as language" in some of his work; and Ann Whipple recalled some Book Club personalities. Other fine articles take up Caslon,

typefounders' moulds, and dust-jackets, among other things. The articles are wonderful reads, and the annual is as beautifully designed and printed and lavishly illustrated as the Randles have spoiled us to expect. The pochoir on the cover, we learned, was executed by John Randle himself – as witnessed by members Peter Koch and Susan Filter on their recent visit to Herefordshire.

Jack Bacon gave us a copy of his latest publication, *The Prize Fight of the Century: Jack Johnson vs. James Jeffries* – not a usual subject for the Club, it might seem, but wait! The author is the Club's own Robert Greenwood, and it is Western history. The book includes many illustrations of the July 4, 1910, contest in Reno, Nevada; a number are from the author's collection. We are pleased to have this bit of Americana.

Roger E. Stoddard, Curator of Rare Books in the Harvard College Library and Senior Curator in Houghton Library, retired, has sent us an issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin* (New Series Spring-Summer 2004 Volume 15 Numbers 1-2). The title is: *RES Gestae, Libri Manent: An Exhibition and Symposium celebrating the Career of Roger E. Stoddard*. It is very nicely done, with lots of illustrations of the books Mr. Stoddard acquired for Harvard over the years, and a number of fine essays on librarianship by leading librarians. Mr. Stoddard also included the text of the talk he gave at the ILAB/ANZAAB Congress in Melbourne, Australia, on October 9, 2004, "Let Us Remain in Friendly Contact!" There is a third item, a folded sheet, "Three Minutes of Fame, Three Things to Say," Mr. Stoddard's farewell remarks on the occasion of his sixty-ninth birthday, December 2, 2004. With such a commitment to librarianship as he has expressed, we hope that Mr. Stoddard's retirement will abound in books – *amor librorum nos unit*.

Former Club President Daniel G. Volkmann, Jr., has done it again: His collection of Californiana, rare books, maps, broadsides, letter sheets, and ephemera went to auction on February 16, 2005, at San Francisco's Society of California Pioneers, under the direction of Dorothy Sloan of Austin, Texas. The handsome catalogue of the sale, 225 items, plus references and index, will be a valuable reference for the Club, and we are grateful to have a copy. It was edited by Jasmine and Jason Star, designed and typeset by Bradley Hutchinson, and printed by the Studley Press of Dalton, Massachusetts.

—Barbara Jane Land



The most notable recent acquisition of the library was Barbara Land's tremendously generous gift of the two-volume *Charles*, which she spotted in the Bromer catalogue. As members may recall from our 1997 Keepsake, these were the books for which we possessed the binding design from the Doves Bindery. When the Keepsake was being prepared, we learned that the books themselves were in the collection of member Charles Gould; Mr. Gould graciously had the volumes photographed for the Keepsake. Mr. Gould died March 15, 2004, at ninety-five, after a career in law; he was an informed book collector and keen on Southern California local history. We are thrilled to have these handsome books (at one time the property of Estelle Doheney) to display with the surviving design. We are deeply grateful to Barbara Land for making so many associations visible on our shelves.



Barbara Land has also found the Club's first Francis & Valentine imprint, an 1878 California *Pioneers Oration* by Col. Charles E. Travers with a *Poem* by Daniel O'Connell, Esquire. This little pamphlet produced for the Pioneers' twenty-eighth anniversary contributes to the Library's collection of local imprints.



Hermits of Laurel Canyon, by Bernice Cornell, arrived as the gift of Anne Hicks Siberell, the publisher, who produced the book in honor of her mother, the author. It is a happy combination of modern methods (QuarkXpress, a Macintosh, and digital printing on Mohawk Superfine paper) with the traditional (handmade mango paper for the interleaf pages and Mexican bark paper for the covers, beautiful hand-binding by John DeMerritt of Emeryville). Our copy is number 44 of 50, signed by the publisher. The book is illustrated with drawings and family photographs. "During my childhood," writes Ms. Siberell, "Laurel Canyon was home to a mix of people in the movie industry, artists and writers who fled the war in Europe, and families like ours who found in its rural setting peaceful and affordable living. The hermits... often walked along Laurel Canyon Boulevard, a narrow, two-lane road to the flatland of Hollywood below to pick up necessities.... If my mother were here today she would contrast the condition of today's homeless, isolated and shunned, with the hermits of Laurel Canyon

who, with great dignity, lived among us forming a part of the fabric of an earlier time." A wonderful little volume, for which thanks.



Back in February, printer Bruce Washbish of the Anchor & Acorn Press, Petaluma, stopped by to give us a copy of his red-bound and Cupid-decorated Valentine volume, *Poèmes Romantiques*. This small booklet, embellished with many vignettes and line drawings, comprises ten poems by Robert Service, Francis Bret Harte, Rudyard Kipling, and Emily Dickinson. A labor of love, obviously; thank you, Bruce.



From Foolscap Press, Santa Cruz, California, we received *Taylers ho, a Snaile! A Crye for haelþ* by Peter Alfred Cottinghamton. This charming illustrated pamphlet purports to be "An Outsider's Quest to Discover the Reality Amongst Strange Facts Regarding the Snail Found in Images Placed in the Margins of Gothic and Medieval Manuscripts," a talk before the Society for the Preservation of Folklore, Burgh House, London; but the date, 1 April 2005, makes one wonder a little. Giant snails, and beer, and archaeological digs, and the courage of tailors... Hmm. The talk itself is delightful, though, and the illustrations are piquant, and it is nicely printed (especially the title page) and bound—so thank you to the folk at Foolscap.



Our friend Wilder Mayo Bentley has, in the manner poetically celebrated in another mollusk, the chambered nautilus, built upon his earlier efforts regarding the abalone:

Homage to A-Balonia

I.

"For Roman priest
the Lenten feast
Need not be cold and bony—
I heard one say
on Shrove Tuesday
'Adveniat abalone!'"

II.

In printer's haunts
the favorite fonts
Are Caslon and Bodoni;
The type is set,
the ink is wet
On poems of abalone;

The press has pressed,
the page is blest –
Redundant abalones!

The Book Club notes
preserve the quotes
From Sterling and his cronies –

They spent their days
in diverse ways
A-rhyming “abalone”

As others might
exhaust the night
Rhyming the word “spumone!”

III.

As mortals must
dust goes to dust –
The righteous road is stony;

Thus likewise end
both foe and friend –
And harmless abalone;

When all must end
as we begin
Motes on a timeless ocean,

‘Tis wrong to mock
the faithful flock,
The priest, and his devotion;

So Fat Tuesdays
(As ’t was always)
Are neither true nor phony;

We change the trend
and shape our end
By giving up baloney!

The Oscar Lewis Award

The Book Club presented its annual Oscar Lewis awards on February 7, 2005, to David Myrick for achievement in Western History and to Joseph J. D'Ambrosio for contributions to the Book Arts. David is well known for his books and articles about railroads and railroading in the west and Western History. Joe is an authority on design, printing, and binding of books and the creator of innovative artist's books. We were sorry that David was unable to be with us for the presentation party, but Joe was his exuberant self for the celebration.

The time has come again for nominations for awards to be presented in February of 2006. Members will find a nomination form with this issue of the Newsletter. Please take some time to consider possible awardees. Mail, fax, or email your selections to the Book Club. We prefer to have nominations in hand by October 1, 2005.

Jeremy C. Cole, Chairman, Oscar Lewis Award Committee

ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

<i>New Patron Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Susan E. Cohn	San Mateo	Vincent J. Lozito
<i>New Sustaining Member</i>		
James J. Kopp	Aurora, OR	Doug Erickson
<i>New Regular Members</i>		
David A. Bayer	Mountain View	Richard Press
Carl Burke	Sacramento	Vincent J. Lozito
Michael Crain	Martinez	Vincent J. Lozito
Darlene Elms	Pinole	Vincent J. Lozito
Sheila Grilli	Martinez	Sheila Mullen
Israel Katz, M.D.	San Francisco	Jonathan Clark
Eric Lyngen	Oakland	Vincent J. Lozito
Dr. Ramon H. Myers	Stanford	Mandy MacCalla
Davis Riemer and Louise Rothman-Riemer	Oakland	Barbara Land
Terry Riley	Oakland	Vincent J. Lozito
Joseph S. Serrano	Daly City	Robert D. Haines, Jr.
Thomas L. Snyder	Vallejo	Vincent J. Lozito
Adam Stackhouse	Los Angeles	George J. Houle
L.M. Wade	Berkeley	Vincent J. Lozito

The following member has changed from sustaining to patron status:

Harry L. Freeman	Fallbrook
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The following members have changed from regular to sustaining status:

Juan Antonio Ascencio	Mexico City, Mexico
Paul Chrzanowski	Livermore
Marjorie L. Coffill	Sonora
Robert Young	Sacramento

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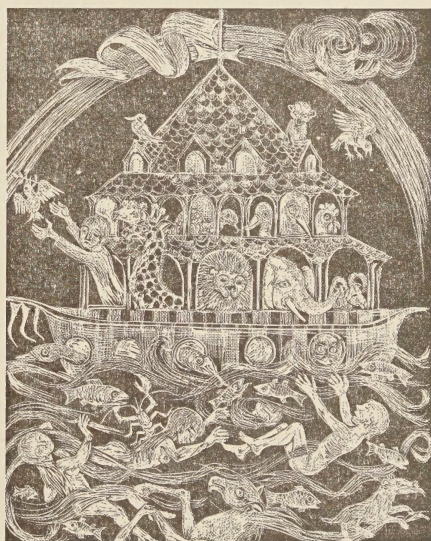
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